

Fact Sheet

March 2003

Resource Conservation and Development Program

Overview

The Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D) is reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill). The purpose of the RC&D program is to encourage and improve the capability of volunteer local elected and civic leaders in designated RC&D areas to plan and carry out projects for resource conservation and community development. Program objectives focus on quality of life improvements achieved through natural resources conservation and community development. Such activities lead to sustainable communities, prudent land use, and the sound management and conservation of natural resources.

Benefits/Accomplishments

The RC&D program pulls together people, communities, Indian tribes, and grassroots groups that unite in shared purpose and pool resources to get work done. More than 20,000 volunteers are serving on and with RC&D councils. They are committed to revitalizing and sustaining their communities through the RC&D program. To date, 368 areas across the Nation (plus the Caribbean and Pacific Basins) have been designated by the Secretary of Agriculture as RC&D areas. They serve more than 85 percent (2,614) of U.S. counties and over 77 percent of the U.S. population. NRCS's goal is to have nationwide coverage by 2005.

In fiscal year 2001, RC&Ds completed more than 3,000 projects. These resulted in 500 businesses created and 1,800 businesses expanded; 7,500 jobs created; 5,000 miles of streams and 880,000 acres of wildlife habitat improved. Over 283,000 people learned new job skills, and nearly 780,000 economically and socially disadvantaged people were served.

How RC&D Works

Assistance is provided, as authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture, to designated RC&D areas through their organized RC&D councils (comprised of local leaders). RC&D councils and their sponsors, in association with State, local, and Federal governments and nonprofit organizations, develop and implement local RC&D area plans. Councils also obtain assistance from other local, State, and Federal agencies; private organizations; and foundations. RC&D priorities are set by area residents to meet their needs.

Eligibility

Technical assistance is available to RC&D areas designated by the Secretary of Agriculture. Technical assistance is available for planning and installing approved projects specified in RC&D area plans, for land conservation, water management, community development, and environmental enhancement elements.

For More Information

If you need more information about RC&D, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

Note: This is not intended to be a definitive interpretation of farm legislation. Rather, it is preliminary and may change as USDA develops implementing policies and procedures. Please check back for updates.